

## Top 10 Tips on Advocacy – CID talks April 2021

*John McTernan (BCW Global)*

1. **Invest and refresh relationships constantly.** These are one of the most essential components to impactful influence. Make yourself available to people and be ready to hear them.
2. **Your first contact with someone should not be about asking them for something.** Develop a relationship first. It starts with offering something valuable to them. Give something extra, leave something behind.
3. **When it comes to political impact, show respect.** Politicians have put themselves forward for these positions. Do your research. Understand how your interests align with their interests and focus on where you agree, not where there is conflict. Build a relationship. Later you can persuade them to do something else.
4. **Don't demand and don't dismiss.** Instead learn to keep the conversation going and treat time as elastic. Only through creativity and open approaches can we encourage an ongoing dialogue that won't come to a stop.
5. **Understand the multitude of ways your argument could be made** so that it's easier for people to walk towards your position. When it comes to complex and unpopular change, don't create one doorway only that people have to come through to agree with you. Instead build lots of alternative bridges.
6. Good policies and good interventions have “edge, crunch, and lift”.
  - **Edge** – how will you cut through the busyness of peoples thoughts and lives?
  - **Crunch** – how will your story be atypical and memorable, and what specifically are you asking for?
  - **Lift** – how will you inspire others to be interested in what you want to achieve?.

7. **Avoid presenting problems as being too big and too complex**, otherwise you'll get paralysis of action. Consider how to make 'asks' of leadership that are manageable and that people can relate to. These are more realistic and likely to be met.
8. **Be patient when it comes to change**. Change takes decades to be embedded in society. But you need to be policy persistent and when the moment ripens, be the person who is there already with a plan.
9. **Be aware of people's constraints**. Much as we experience different constraints in our work, those who we want to impact also have their own battles and restrictions.
10. **You can't win a political battle against the culture**. You can shape the culture to shape politics, but not the other way around.

*Michael Sheldrick (Global Citizen)*

1. **Identify and transform a complex policy agenda into a story** that will penetrate the public and drive people to action. Be clear about what the end-point is - what's the call to action? - and what constitutes an identifiably successful campaign that you can measure.
2. **"Pop meets policy" is a successful formula**. Make your content compelling with an edge (what is new about the delivery of this message?) so that it reaches people, advances and creates leverage with grass-root organisers. Create a platform that has a range of potential actions for the public.
3. **Be specific and targeted in what people can do**. Beyond simply getting them to sign a petition. Think about other ways that people can be part of the action.
4. **Once people are on board, keep them connected**. The goal is to embed people in continuous actions over time to drive momentum and amplify buy-in by others.

5. **Incentivise your advocacy.** Encourage people to go beyond just raising awareness; Help them learn more about issues, get engaged and become major drivers of change as part of a movement.
6. **Avoid engaging with the private sector in a purely transactional way.** Effective private sector engagement requires selecting the right partnerships and alignment around a commitment to a shared outcome.
7. **Feel-good events as part of advocacy trigger action.** Consider how you can utilise your local cultural capital, events and individuals (such as artists, sportspeople, etc.). This strengthens the potential to hold local leaders accountable and drive specific policy action.
8. **Authenticity is essential when engaging high profile figures and celebrities.** Avoid forcing them into a specific actions they may not be comfortable doing. Provide them with information on the issue. See how they relate and what they are comfortable doing. Let them drive their actions.
9. **Demonstrate delivery on commitments.** This is really important. Measure results. Have detailed records. Make sure you can demonstrate the number of lives that have been impacted. Third party validation of your advocacy can make your impact more tangible.
10. **You have a responsibility to communicate back to stakeholders.** What is the impact of their voice and action? To sustain advocacy, accountability is just as critical as delivering a campaign.